

Study paves way for solutions to boost pediatric clinical trial enrollment

February 12 2024, by Elizabeth Chapin



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Every year in the U.S., about 15,000 children and teens under 20 are diagnosed with cancer. Yet, most don't get a chance to participate in clinical trials, which offer the newest, most promising treatments and

improve patient outcomes.

A new University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center study [published](#) in *JCO Oncology Practice* sheds light on this disparity and paves the way for solutions to increase clinical trial participation among [young patients](#) with cancer.

Co-led by Eric Durbin, Dr.P.H., director of the Kentucky Cancer Registry and Cancer Research Informatics Shared Resource Facility at the UK Markey Cancer Center, the research demonstrates the feasibility of linking central cancer registry and pediatric cancer clinical trial consortium data to track patients and describe gaps in clinical trial enrollment. The research is being used to guide a nationwide linkage study between the National Childhood Cancer Registry and the Children's Oncology Group (COG).

The research team successfully linked data from the Kentucky Cancer Registry, which tracks all new cancer cases in the state, and the COG, a national database of children enrolled in [clinical trials](#). By matching these datasets, they identified Kentucky patients who had not enrolled in a clinical trial or other COG study.

"This study is a crucial step toward ensuring all children have access to the latest and most effective cancer treatments offered by clinical trials," said Durbin. "By pinpointing who isn't participating, we can develop strategies to bridge the gap. This is particularly important for Kentucky, which has the fourth highest incidence rate of childhood cancer compared to other states."

The researchers found that only 47% of children with [cancer](#) were enrolled in clinical trials. Younger children and those with certain cancers, like kidney, neuroblastoma, and leukemia, were more likely to be included.

Analyzing this data can help doctors understand referral patterns and identify groups underrepresented in clinical trials. The information can then be used to develop targeted strategies to increase enrollment among these groups.

More information: David A. Siegel et al, Population-Based Data Linkage Describing Patterns of Cancer Clinical Trial Enrollment Among Children and Adolescents, *JCO Oncology Practice* (2024). [DOI: 10.1200/OP.23.00325](https://doi.org/10.1200/OP.23.00325)

Provided by University of Kentucky

Citation: Study paves way for solutions to boost pediatric clinical trial enrollment (2024, February 12) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-02-paves-solutions-boost-pediatric-clinical.html>

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